



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Nez Perce-Clearwater
National Forest

903 3rd St.
Kamiah, ID 83536
208-588-3400

Categorical Exclusion Water Resources Specialist Report

Project Name: Big Creek Hazardous Tree Removal

Date Submitted to Project File: August 3, 2017

Project Sponsor (Name/Phone/E-mail): Andrew Lane, 208-983-4017

Project Description

Ranger District/Zone: Red River Ranger District

SubBasin/Subwatershed: Salmon River subbasin/Big Creek subwatershed

*See Project Proposal Description document in the Project File

Scope

The purpose of this report is to evaluate whether the proposed project has potential “significant and adverse impacts” on water resources, and therefore whether the project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion.

Purpose & Need, Proposed Action, & Design Criteria

The Red River Ranger District is proposing the removal of hazard trees in approximately 181 acres (map below). Many Spruce snags were identified, posing hazards to FS and private travelers of the 311 road.

Logging will take place within 200 feet of the 311 road and only dead standing trees would be cut, felled, skidded, bucked, and hauled. Feller bunchers, chainsaws, skidders, loaders, and logging trucks would be used to accomplish the above actions. The main access and haul route would be the 311, 1188, and 222 (Red River) roads. Landing piles would be constructed and burned by the fire crew post-harvest. If any, monitoring will be conducted post-implementation.

No logging would occur within any riparian areas, wilderness areas, landslide prone areas, roadless areas. Purchaser would pull cable to down trees in areas over 35% slopes. No temp roads would be needed. Landings and skid trails would be scarified after use. Best management practices would be implemented to protect stream courses. 150’ buffers would be implemented on all intermittent streams, 300’ buffers would be implemented on all fish bearing streams (if present).

Work could begin as early as the summer of 2017 and will take 1 year to complete the project.

Affected Area

Impacts to water resources are addressed at the watershed, subwatershed, and reach scale. Water resources include live water (streams, rivers, standing water), subsurface waters (i.e. wetlands, floodplains, groundwater), and springs/seeps.

Potential Impact Analysis

The following actions were completed to assess the impact on surface and groundwater resources:

- Extraordinary Circumstances review
- Federal and State compliance review
- Design Criteria review





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- Geospatial analysis > RCHA buffer and activity proximity

Extraordinary Circumstances Review

PROTECTED RESOURCE	PRESENT?		ADVERSE EFFECT?	
Floodplain(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA
Wetland(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA
Municipal Watershed(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA

*Authority: FSH 1909.15 Chapter 30 (USDA, 2007), Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplains) and 11990 (Wetlands)

The project overlaps with Riparian Conservation Habitat Area (RHCA). However these as well as landslide prone areas will be appropriately buffered in accordance with PACFISH-INFISH and no logging will occur within.

No ground disturbance that would potentially effect groundwater systems are proposed in this project.

Clean Water Act: Sections 303(d) TMDLs and 305(b) Impaired Waters

	PRESENT?		ADVERSE EFFECT?	
303(d)-Listed Stream(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA
Ground disturbance?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA
Pollutant/issue to exceed temperature standards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA
Further impairment of the watershed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA

Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act (1960)

	PRESENT?		ADVERSE EFFECT?	
Wild & Scenic River	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA
Other Beneficial Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA
Water Rights violations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No/NA	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No/NA

Secondary Contact Recreation has not been assessed and therefore status of this beneficial use cannot be assessed in regards to this project. Cold water aquatic life is currently not being supported.

Proposed actions are adjacent to source water for Elk City Water and Sewer Association. Effects from proposed actions are not expected to have effects on source water's water quality.

Federal and Forest Plan Consistency

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest is under Forest Plan Revision, and still functioning under separate Forest Plans. The Clearwater National Forest Plan (USDA, 1987b) objective for water quality is to meet or exceed "current Idaho Water Quality Standards" and to accomplish such objective through use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) (IDAPA Chapter 58 ;FSM 2532, 1992; FS990a, 2012). BMPs include Soil and Water Conservation Practices (FSH 2509.22) to control, mitigate, and monitor non-point source pollution.





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The proposed project is consistent with the federal and state standards, goals, and objectives for water resources.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Considering design criteria and adaptive use of BMPs, no actions including ground disturbance are expected to potentially or noticeably effect groundwater systems and/or increase sediment or water yields into surface waters. Proposed actions to not present any additional water quantity or quality concerns. In conclusion, no direct or indirect significant, adverse effects to floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds are proposed or expected for this project.

Cumulative Effects

The proposed action and design criteria present negligible potential for non-point or point sources of pollution/contamination to water resources. The proposed project would not create any new adverse effects to the resources of concern listed above, therefor, there would be no cumulative adverse impacts.

Conclusion

Based on my review of the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Cynthia Valle, Forest Hydrologist August 3, 2017
NAME, JOB TITLE DATE





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